Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 18. (Cancelled)

19. (currently amended) A linear drive with at least one motor element mounted on or in a retaining element, the at least one motor element driving a pinion directly or indirectly, optionally via an integrated drive, said pinion interacting with a linear guide, ~~and~~

the retaining element being movable in relation to a receiving element by at least one actuator, and

preload movement of said retaining element being measured directly from a force signal.

20. (currently amended) A linear drive with at least one motor element mounted on or in a retaining element, the at least one motor element driving a pinion directly or indirectly, optionally via an integrated drive, said pinion interacting with a linear guide, wherein in order to guarantee permanent freedom from backlash and/or permanent two-flank contact between said pinion and said linear guide, the retaining element can be controlled, moved or preloaded under active control during

operation in response to a direct measurement of force in horizontal and/or vertical direction of the pinion via at least one actuator in relation to a receiving element.

21. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 19, wherein the retaining element is coupled to the receiving element by at least one guide element and can move back and forth in a linear direction in relation to the receiving element.

22. (currently amended) The linear drive as claimed in claim 21, wherein each said guide element is designed as one of a leaf spring element~~,~~ and a linear guide~~, and a needle roller bearing~~.

23. (currently amended) The linear ~~guide~~ drive as claimed in claim 19, wherein the retaining element is ~~slightly~~ distant from the receiving element and arranged parallel thereto.

24. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 23, wherein in each side area in an area of one upper side and in an area of one lower side of said retaining element and said receiving element, said receiving element and said retaining element are each linked to one another in flange areas by leaf spring elements.

25. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 19, wherein at least one side area of the receiving element, a connecting piece engages at least partly in a recess of the retaining element and said at least one actuator is employed between a flange of the retaining element and the connecting piece.

26. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 19, wherein each said actuator comprises one of a piezo actuator, a shape memory actuator, an electrically operated actuator, a mechanically operated actuator, and a hydraulically operated actuator.

27. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 22, wherein at least one force and/or position sensor is assigned to the at least one guide element.

28. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 19, wherein at least one force and/or position sensor is assigned to the at least one actuator.

29. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 25, wherein at least one force and/or position sensor is assigned to the connecting piece in an area of the mounting of the at least one actuator.

30. (previously presented) The linear drive as claimed in claim 19, wherein at least one force and/or position sensor is assigned to the at least one motor element and/or the integrated drive.

31. (withdrawn) The linear drive as claimed in claim 19, wherein an actuator in the form of a spindle drive for linear movement of a wedge is mounted on the retaining element in an area of one upper side.

32. (withdrawn) The linear drive as claimed in claim 31, wherein a flange is assigned to the receiving element that interacts with the wedge of the spindle drive of the retaining element.

33. (currently amended) A process for the operation of a linear drive with a motor element mounted on or in a retaining element, the motor element driving a pinion, optionally via an integrated drive, said pinion interacting with a linear guide,

said process comprising

measuring a force of the pinion in relation to the linear guide in a horizontal and/or a vertical direction <u>directly from a force signal from a force sensor assigned to the motor element and/or the integrated drive</u>, and determining and/or setting a

preload force of the pinion in relation to the linear guide in order to guarantee a permanent freedom from backlash and/or a permanent two-flank contact between the pinion and the linear guide.

34. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 33, further comprising during operation with changing accelerations and/or speeds and/or loads and/or dead weights a preload force between said pinion and said linear guide can be determined and/or changed and/or controlled by permanent force measurement in horizontal and/or vertical direction for the control of a plurality of actuators.

35. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 33, further comprising controlling the preload force between the pinion and the linear guide depending on acceleration during operation in order to guarantee a permanent freedom from backlash and/or a permanent two-flank contact between the pinion and the linear guide.

36. (currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 33, further comprising via ~~the~~ guide elements, in particular the leaf spring elements, permanently setting a preload force via the at least one actuator and permanently changing the preload force and/or adapting the preload force during operation to

change accelerations and/or loads and/or speeds.